

Berkshire County projects see \$125,000 increase from earlier FY 10 appropriation bills□

WASHINGTON – Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced today the conference report for the fiscal year 2010 omnibus appropriations bill approved by Congress includes \$3,497,000 in federal assistance for various projects in Berkshire County.

Congressman Olver is a member of the Appropriations Committee and Chairman of the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee and worked to include the funding in the omnibus spending legislation. The omnibus represents six out of twelve annual appropriations bills pulled together into one package. The Senate must now approve the conference report before it goes to the President for signature.

The projects and their included dollar amounts are:

\$750,000 for Berkshire Community College's Renewable Energy Resource Center

This funding will contribute toward Berkshire Community College's (BCC) conversion of the Pittsfield Campus' Ralph Hoffman Environmental Center (RHEC) into a Renewable Energy Resource Training Center. The Training Center will consist of two classrooms, four programmatically distinct laboratory configurations, a self-sustaining greenhouse, state-of-the-art computer hardware and software, and "green" technology instructional equipment.

"While we have seen jobs disappear in many industries over the past year, employment in green industries remains strong," Congressman John Olver said. "BCC is responding to the demand for specialists in green technologies and construction. The Training Center will be the only facility of its kind in the County, and will ensure that the area's workforce keeps up with the changing job market."

An earlier version of the FY10 Transportation and Housing Appropriations Bill included

\$650,000 for this project.

Since the early 1970's, BCC's Ralph Hoffmann Environmental Center (RHEC) has been home to classroom and laboratory facilities supporting the instructional needs of the Environmental Science program. Because of significant changes to technology over the years, the RHEC facility has not only become outdated, but the learning spaces cannot accommodate new teaching methods.

For additional information, please contact: Paul Raverta, President, BCC, 413-236-1003, praverta@berkshirecc.edu

\$1,400,000 for Berkshire Rides

Berkshire Rides is a non-profit organization that works to improve public transportation access for residents in the towns of Florida, Clarksburg, Savoy, Cheshire, North Adams, Adams and Williamstown. This funding will be used to support and expand community transportation services in the Northern Berkshires operated by Berkshire Rides, formerly known as the Transportation Association of Northern Berkshire (TANB). Specifically, these funds will assist the organization in expanding its employment transportation program, as well as to help expand its services to young people.

"There has always been a tremendous need for public transportation services in the northern Berkshire region," Olver said. "Berkshire Rides has worked hard to help close the gap in public transportation services. However, there are still unmet transportation needs in northern Berkshire County. This funding will build on the progress we have made in public transportation services in the region."

Contact for additional information: Jana Brule, Director of Berkshire Rides, at 413-664-0300

\$135,000 for Berkshire South Regional Community Center's Anti-Bullying Project

The Anti-Bullying Project will teach, inform, and raise awareness of various aspects of bullying to students ranging from ages 5-17 in three area school systems, home schooled children, program participants at BSRCC, as well as parents and the greater community. The curriculum

will focus on anger management training, conflict management, confidence building and better and different ways of communicating. In addition, the program will undertake a community-wide media campaign to heighten the community's awareness of signs and symptoms of bullying, as well as strategies for addressing the behavior.

Congressman John Olver said, "Bullying not only emotionally affects our children, but has been linked to juvenile delinquency, violence, and other anti-social behaviors. We must address these negative behaviors when they are first displayed so we can help improve our children's future and help create a better community."

For additional information, please contact: Eliza Crescentini, 413-528-2810 ext. 14, ecrescentini@berkshiresouth.org

\$375,000 for City of North Adams Armory ADA Compliance

This funding will be used to make the historic State Army Building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act to extend community usage.

Congressman John Olver said, "The Armory's size and location made it a logical choice for a community center. The City has already made quite a lot of progress on restoring and repairing the building, and its presence has been an excellent addition to the area. These renovations will ensure that everyone who wants to access the programs that take place there will be able to."

An earlier version of the FY10 Transportation and Housing Appropriations Bill included \$350,000 for this project.

The State Armory Building on Ashland Street served as a National Guard facility for many years. Located in one of the city's busiest corridors, the City of North Adams acquired the property in January, 2007, with the intention that it would serve the community at large as a community center. The building was in a state of disrepair. With the use of State and Federal funds, the City has been able to stabilize the building and begin repair work on the roof,

windows, exterior stairs, exterior façade, interior flooring and water damaged areas. Now, attention has turned to the interior of the building. Presently, the Armory is home to the North Adams Basketball League as well as other community programs. Future anticipated uses include after-school programs.

For additional information, please contact: Michael Nuvaille, Office of Community Development, City of North Adams, 413-662-3025, naocd@bcn.net

\$500,000 for City of Pittsfield Streetscaping Project

This funding will contribute toward the multi-phase streetscape project currently underway in Pittsfield. This spring at the corner of West Housatonic and South Street the City began to implement its plan for downtown revitalization. It has continued through Park Square to the new movie theater on North Street and represents a section of the main core of the downtown business district.

"This money will help further the progress already being made in the revitalization of downtown Pittsfield," Olver said. "The City has seen a boost to the arts and culture sector, new and exciting private investments in downtown are currently underway, and as each phase of the project nears completion, sections of the City will become friendlier for residents and tourists alike," Congressman John Olver said.

The work has begun and progress can be seen in front of the Colonial Theatre. There is new decorative paving, new ornamental streetlights, sidewalks have been reconstructed, public art and historical statues will begin to be shown, plaques and plantings have started to make the downtown seem more welcoming. The goal of streetscaping is to make downtown Pittsfield more attractive and appealing for residents, tourists and businesses, enhance the city's unique characteristics, and improve the environment for pedestrians.

For additional information, please contact: Deanna Ruffer, 413-499-9449, druffer@pittsfieldch.com

\$250,000 for South Berkshire Educational Collaborative's Instructional & Operational Support Services

This funding is to help the Southern Berkshire Education Collaborative implement cost share programs to all of the school districts in Berkshire County. The Collaborative will provide support in three areas: 1) assistance in the implementation special education legislation 2) cooperative staff development for teachers and administrators and 3) provision of cooperative purchasing assistance for supplies and services.

"There are basic needs that all school systems have. Rather than re-creating the wheel all over the county, it makes sense for all these school systems to work together in order to save money in these very difficult times." Congressman John Olver said.

For additional information, please contact: Peter Kopcha, 413-528-6263 x15, pkopcha@educationalcollaborative.org

\$87,000 for Community Policing in Pittsfield

Berkshire Mediation of Pittsfield will use these funds to enhance community policing in the region. While identifying and apprehending criminals is the first priority of a police department, equally important is partnering with communities to prevent crime and to provide opportunities for healing and restitution. The shared interests of the police, local communities, and mediation centers include prevention of low-level conflicts from escalating into violent confrontation, resolving complex neighborhood disputes and finding solutions that improve the quality of life for community residents.

Congressman John Olver said, "Currently our police departments are stretched very thin. Every effort that can be made to change the fabric of a community which in turn reduces violence and bullying should be supported."

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Olver Announces \$3.5 Million for Berkshire County in FY 2010 Federal Spending Package

December 11, 2009
